

Claims:

1. A process for improving the rheological properties of aqueous pigment compositions which comprises ultrasonic treatment at a frequency of 16 to 100 kHz of aqueous pigment dispersions or suspensions.
2. The process according to claim 1 wherein the pigment compositions contain organic or inorganic pigments, or mixtures thereof.
3. The process according to claim 2 wherein the organic pigments are monoazo, disazo, azomethine, naphthol (β -naphthol) or metal-complex pigments, such as phthalocyanines and azomethine metal-complex pigments.
4. The process according to claim 2 wherein the inorganic pigments are titanium oxide pigments, iron oxide and hydroxide pigments, chromium oxide pigments, spinel type calcined pigments, lead chromate pigments, bismuth vanadate pigments, carbon black and Prussian Blue.
5. The process according to any of claims 1 to 4 wherein the solids content of the aqueous pigment compositions is from 20 to 70, preferably from 30 to 70%, based on the weight of the composition.
6. The process according to any of claims 1 to 5 wherein the aqueous pigment compositions contain further additives, including polymers, dispersants, antifoams and biocides.
7. The process according to any of claims 1 to 6 wherein the ultrasonic treatment is carried out in a flow-through-, single pass- or re-circulation-system for a period of time from about 5 seconds up to 5 minutes, preferably from about 5 seconds to about 2 minutes.
8. The process according to any of claims 1 to 7 wherein the frequency of ultrasound is from 16 to 40 kHz, preferably from 16 to 20 kHz.
9. Method of using of ultrasonic energy for improving the rheological properties of aqueous pigment compositions.

10. Aqueous pigment compositions of improved rheological properties obtained according to the process (method) according to any of claims 1 to 9.

11. Use of the aqueous pigment compositions according to claim 10 for preparing colourant compositions, preferably inks or paints.